

On the use of Calomel in the fevers of children.

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of Pennsylvania
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The clime unkind, or noxious food inapt
To embryo nerves hereditary ill-
The feeble births acquired diseases chase
Till death extinguish the degenerate race.
Temple of nature

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It has been observed by Physicians and others, that one third of the children born in London die before they reach the age of two years, and it is probable that the mortality is nearly as great in the other large cities of Europe; in the cities of the United States it is certainly not near so great, and that for the following reasons.

1st Weak and debilitated women may bring forth strong and healthy children, but *ceteris paribus* sickly women bear sickly children, and vice versa; and again, the easier the labour is, the better is the prospect of health for the child; now it is a fact disputed by none, that the women of this country are much more healthy than those of Europe, and it is equally beyond controversy that difficult labours are here comparatively very rare.

2nd In the higher classes of society in this country children are much more frequently nursed by their mothers than in Europe.

+ Dr Clarke says one fourth.

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3rd The lower classes of society are here much better provided for, and enjoy a degree of comfort and happiness totally unknown by those of the same rank in Europe.

4th We have not those extremes of wealth and poverty, so common in old countries, which are both such fruitful sources of disease. Many other general causes of the greater mortality of children in the cities of Europe might be adduced, the above will probably be accounted sufficient at present. Nevertheless even in this country, many more children are swept off by disease in proportion to their numbers than adults; the diseases of children are certainly much more violent than those of adults; but their powers of nature to resist disease are proportionally stronger. The fatality of the maladies of children may then be sought for in other causes besides their violence. By whom are their diseases treated? very frequently indeed not by Physicians, but by Quacks, midwives, and nurses;

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what are the remedies used? Forb teas, cataplasmes of bitter herbs, pods of wogges hair, of black lambs wool and hundreds of other articles equally efficacious. How it may be in the cities of the United States I know not, but in the country a Physician is rarely called in to see a child, until it has been previously treated by the prescriptions of all the old women in the neighbourhood. This is an evil not to be remedied by any law, but only by the general diffusion of information among all classes of the community.

By the almost universal consent of practitioners and particularly in this country no one medicine is so much employed in the treatment of the diseases of children as Calomel, specified by the Professor of Chemistry, in the medical department of this University, to be the muriate of the protoxide of mercury. It may also be said without dread of contradiction, that no one medicine is employed with so much advantage in these cases,

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to use in some of the fevers of children in
 conjoint operation with other remedies shall be
 the subject of the present essay.

Dr Chopman observes in his "Therapeutics, Vol. 1,"
 page 206 article, "Calomel." "Whenever we wish
 a strong and permanent impression to be made
 on the alimentary canal and through it on the
 neighbouring viscera or on the system generally
 calomel by universal consent is consecrated to
 these purposes." In most of the diseases of chil-
 dren a permanent impression on the alimentary ca-
 nal and through it on the system generally is
 precisely what is wanted, and this impression
 calomel alone will certainly and powerfully
 produce. Its being devoid of taste and smell,
 is also a matter of no small consequence in
 these cases.

The fevers of children are generally speaking produ-
 ced by the same causes as those of adults.
 Among these causes disorder of the digestive or-

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children, it is well known are produced by the
use.

When the above or other causes produce a de-
rangement in the digestive organs of children and
a diarrhea does not take place, a fever is fre-
quently the consequence. In debilitated children a
diarrhea is most frequently the result, in the others
there is an inflammatory fever. The fever is produced
by a loss of appetite a disposition to rest
and not to run about and play as usual;
the pulse was somewhat excited the face was
in some cases the symptoms of a cold in the head
were present viz. the nostrils gave the sensation of
being stopped up and a thin mucus distilled from
them; the face was flushed, the tongue white
and furred, but in some cases of a yellow co-
lour, and the bowels were costive
After these symptoms had continued from 24 to 36 hours,
a fever was produced, the pulse then became more
frequent and stronger, the face was flushed. The

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we are heavy, the skin and head very hot, in some cases delirium was present, vomiting of bilious matter sometimes took place, in some cases a slight chill preceded, but in a majority it was not to be observed; the fever was a remittent having its exacerbations about 5 or 6 o'clock P.M. and its remissions about the same hour of day. The treatment proved successful in this case of fever was exceedingly simple. If there was sickness at stomach or vomiting, an emetic of tart ant. & pot. dissolved in water was given, if delirium existed, if the face was much flushed ~~and~~ the heat and the pulse strong, from a child five or six years old from $\frac{3}{4}$ v to viii of blood were drawn.

At night gr v or vi of colomel were given and next morning a table spoonful of castor oil, or $\frac{3}{4}$ i ofenna in infusion in two doses; that night the colomel was repeated and the purging medicine the next morning. This generally stopped the fever at once & if the bleeding was repeated if necessary and the

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colonel and oil or sinna were given twice more,
as above; the fever then ceased as far as was
under my notice. In two cases it was thought ne-
cessary to divide the gums with a lancet; the in-
flammation produced by the cutting of the teeth no
result aided much in these cases in the prostration
of the fever, certainly dividing the gums checked
it somewhat. The colonel by itself generally
will not produce any evacuation, but by the pres-
ence of the other medicine a pretty brisk purg-
e was produced. The stools were abundant and of a
dark brown or green colour, in two cases a
smaller were evacuated. In the case it is
probable the colonel did not act alone by its
evacuating power; it is more consistent with the
present state of medical science to sup-
pose that it acted by making new impressions on
the alimentary canal (and by sympathy on the sys-
tem generally) and of necessity destroying those
there, which had produced and continued

+ said to denote acidity.

[illegible]

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 naturally presume that the aquatic water was also
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The following treatment was given. 1/2 oz. of calomel were given at night and a third doseful of castor oil next morning. The evacuation was produced and continued until the cessation of a watery motion. Some at the latter mixed with a quantity of mucus. The evacuations were



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Case 2nd of black and red and in fact
was affected with the following symptoms;
He had a slow venous flow. His respirations were
in 18; but in the afternoon and the
evenings about 20 in min. Dried at night with
sweating. Her pulse in the morning was about 110 -
15, and in the evening about 125 or 130 strokes in
the minute and with some degree of tension. Partic-
ularly during the exacerbations, her respiration was
timid and hard, and she complained of pain when
it was forced; Her bowels were constipated and
feces were discharged with violence in their ex-
istence, being of a very dark colour and so ex-
cessive much like those described in the previous
case. He sometimes complained of head ache. The pupils
of her eyes were much dilated. Her appetite was
very bad; she remained in one position during the
whole day, and never spoke except when ~~asked~~
a question. Her tongue was of a dark brown
colour and rough, and her breath fetid and fi-



person and manner resembled very much those of
an idiot. He has been almost three months taken
prescribed for.

The following treatment was awarded, 3rd Jan 20th at
Colonel were given at night and a large quantity
of castor oil next morning; the evacuations were
of a dark colour and small in quantity. 4th Jan
FIV of Colonel were given at night and 7th X of Calabar
next morning, the evacuations were very abundant,
of a dark colour and a peculiar iced mass. 6th
Jan VI of Colonel were given at night and 8th X of
Calabar next morning; the evacuations were abundant
and of the appearance above mentioned. The medicines
were interrupted from day partly on account of the
weakness of the patient, and partly owing to the com-
mands of her mistress, a small quantity of wine, water
and strong beef soup were given during this time.

7th Day 9th VI of Colonel were given at night and a
large quantity of castor oil next morning; the evacua-
tions were the same as above described. 9th XII of Calabar

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were now given every other day for two weeks.
Her stools had now become of the natural appearance,
her abdomen had unburdened her mind to was good
and her hunger had completely ceased. The medicines
were discontinued supposing her to be perfectly well.
In three weeks all her complaints had returned,
and that without any assignable cause and she
had precisely the same symptoms and appearance which
she had before her medicines were discontinued.

Under these circumstances the following treatment was
pursued: 1st day 9^o VI of calomel were given at night
and a table spoonful of castor oil next morning; the
evacuations were pretty abundant and precisely of
the appearance above described. 1st day 9^o VI of calomel
were given at night 9^o X of rhubarb next morning. 3rd day
9^o VI of calomel were given at night and 9^o X of rhubarb
next morning; the evacuations were so small; 9^o X of
rhubarb was then given every other day for two
weeks. 4th day 9^o VI of calomel were given at night and
a table spoonful of castor oil next morning.

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20th Jan. 90 VI, & calomel were given at night and
 IX of rhubarb next morning. The wind was N.W.,
 of violent winter blasts every day, two times
 was removed; the storm and now became calmer
 and all the symptoms had subsided. IX of rhubarb
 were given every other day for the week. 29th Jan.
 90 VI of calomel were given at night and IX of
 rhubarb next morning. The appetite of the patient
 was some weak, and her stools perfectly natu-
 ral and without use of more consequence she became
 more cheerful and her countenance had lost that
 idiotic appearance and became perfectly intelligent.
 From the time she has remained in hospital until the
 closing the time of cure her diet was necessarily
 consisted of beef, chicken and mutton with some
 potatoes; bread and wine next to her
 and she needed to take exercise in the open
 air, it being summer.

In these last cases the cure was probably
 probably caused, the disease was not cured, and

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the aphorism & the above remedy,
the symptoms as well as the disease itself
are abolished, or at least relieved,
the disorder of the alimentary canal, as soon
as the first & the latter part are restored and
symptoms of disease are removed.

In these cases the stomach and bowels had been
disordered for some time, hence it was necessary
to repeat the remedies often both to evacuate the
bowels completely as well as to alter the
existing state of these parts. The result in all the
above cases was such by lastly that it might
remain some time in the bowels and of course be
afterwards of making more permanent impressions.
In cases of children a salivation is no doubt a de-
vicious evil, and always much to be dreaded, in the
above cases not the smallest symptom of a sore mouth
existed, and in cases of croup and hydrocephalus much
larger quantities of mercury have been used without
apprehending any danger from that source.

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The above essay is necessarily very short and imperfect,
as it contains only the experience of a student of
medicine, in the shop of a country practitioner during
a few months. 



